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PARTICIPATION OF UNIDO IN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO STUDY AND MITIGATE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE CHERNOBYL ACCIDENT

Report by the Director-General

Summary

In compliance with paragraph 3 of General Conference resolution GC.4/Res.1, reports on its implementation.

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Introduction

1. In resolution GC.4/Res.1 the General Conference, inter alia, requested the Director-General to continue to take appropriate measures on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/190 within the mandate of UNIDO, and in cooperation with the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation for Chernobyl. The present document describes the measures taken by UNIDO as well as the mechanisms for coordination within the United Nations system.

I. BACKGROUND

2. In compliance with the above resolution, UNIDO activities were undertaken within the framework of the Ad Hoc Inter-agency Task Force to Address the Consequences of the Nuclear Accident at Chernobyl, established in 1991 by the Administrative Committee on Coordination in response to General Assembly resolution 45/190. The Task Force, whose chairman serves as the principal coordinator of cooperation within the United Nations system for Chernobyl, comprises representatives of those United Nations agencies and organizations which, by virtue of their mandates, can provide direct and relevant assistance and advice, particularly in the critical sectors of health, agriculture, environmental and energy planning, resettlement, education and public information, industry and infrastructure. In March 1991, UNIDO was invited by the United Nations Secretary-General to join the Task Force and since its inception has actively participated in its meetings, the most recent of which was held at Geneva on 16 April 1993.

3. The Task Force has worked in close cooperation with the Inter-agency Committee for the Response to Nuclear Accidents to benefit from its technical appraisal of project proposals. UNIDO participated as an observer in the final meetings of the Committee when the technical report was prepared within the framework of the International Chernobyl Project on the Status of the International Assessment of the Radiological Consequences of the Chernobyl Accident (cf. General Assembly resolution 46/150, para. 4).

4. A joint plan of international cooperation to alleviate the effects of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, prepared by the Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, with contributions from UNIDO and other organizations in the United Nations system, was presented to a Pledging Conference on 21 September 1991 in New York. The plan covered 131 project proposals requiring approximately $650 million in external funding. More than 30 project concepts were designated for UNIDO

execution, in some cases in cooperation with other United Nations specialized agencies. While some $8 million was pledged on a bilateral basis, the Pledging Conference did not succeed in raising significant multilateral financial support for the proposed projects. The considerably lower level of pledges to the Chernobyl Trust Fund established for multilateral financing of projects proposed under the joint plan, amounting to approximately $1 million, severely limits the financing of proposed projects. As a consequence, none of the UNIDO projects were considered by the Task Force for priority financing.

II. PRIORITY PROJECTS

5. As an initial measure for the industrial sector, UNIDO views as essential the preparation of an industrial survey of the three republics affected by the Chernobyl accident. In June 1991, UNIDO, in cooperation with the Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, took the initiative to prepare such a survey. The survey was proposed as an information baseline of affected industries in order to facilitate international cooperation in rehabilitation and relocation of industries. It also aimed to identify priority projects for technical cooperation and investment. A UNIDO preparatory mission for policy-level discussions was fielded to all three countries in June 1991 to ascertain the views of the Governments on the proposed survey. Unfortunately, despite efforts of the authorities of some of the Governments concerned, it was not possible to secure financial support for the survey.

6. Other priority projects selected by UNIDO for possible financing from available resources for consideration by the Chairman of the Task Force in October 1992 include: (a) small-scale private enterprise and employment opportunities for population resettled from territories exposed to radioactive contamination; (b) prefabricated and construction materials for housing settlers from the contaminated area; (c) investment needs for the baby food production industry for the area (preparatory assistance). To date no financial support for any of the priority projects has been secured.

7. During the November 1992 Task Force meeting at Kiev, Ukraine, an appeal was formulated by the heads of the Chernobyl committees from all three affected countries for increased international assistance. High priority was accorded to economic rehabilitation. Following that meeting, UNIDO initiated its own efforts to mobilize resources for the preparation of the industrial survey. A project document with an estimated budget of $420,000 was prepared and recently submitted to the UNIDO Programme and Project Review Committee for approval. At its recent Geneva meeting, the Task Force endorsed the UNIDO project on the industrial survey of the three republics affected by the Chernobyl accident, in recognition of the urgent and humanitarian nature of the needs addressed by the survey. However, no funds were allocated by the Task Force for the project.

III. ACTION REQUIRED OF THE BOARD

8. The Board may wish to appeal to donor Governments to provide financing for the proposed priority projects, in particular the industrial survey described in paragraph 5 of the present document.